

VZCZCXRO2306
PP RUEHCI
DE RUEHKA #6719 3340749
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 300749Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2714
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9502
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1383
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8820
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7670
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 006719

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2016

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: ZIA TO AMBASSADOR: YOU'RE ALL PRO-AWAMI LEAGUE

Classified By: Ambassador Patricia Butenis, reason para 1.4 d.

¶1. (SBU) Late November 29, Ambassador met for 75 minutes with Bangladesh Nationalist Party chairperson Khaleda Zia, who has recently taken the initiative to reach out to key chiefs of mission. Former Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, party secretary general Mannan Bhuiyan, and former foreign affairs

SIPDIS

advisor Reaz Rahman sat in.

¶2. (C) Ambassador noted she did not represent the opposition Awami League, but like the UN, the EU, and other local diplomatic missions, we have concerns about the framework being put in place for the upcoming election. It is evident, she stated, that the former ruling party continues to exert great influence on the chief adviser to the caretaker government, and that the caretaker government is not acting neutrally or effectively to resolve obvious obstacles to a successful election.

¶3. (C) Zia bristled, "You diplomats all support the Awami League," and insisted the caretaker government is completely neutral and that Awami League's demands are endless and pointless. She repeated her public criticism of activist caretaker government advisers who allegedly exceed their brief to advance a partisan political agenda. She and her party colleagues reiterated their view that the Awami League is violent, vengeful, perfidious, and that there is "not one iota of trust" in the Awami League.

¶4. (C) Zia said her party could accept modifications in the candidate registration dates in the election schedule, provided polling day remains on or about January 21. She expressed confidence in winning the election because, Zia said, the October 28 blood-letting unleashed by the opposition reminded apprehensive Bangladeshis of the Awami League's propensity for violence and confrontation.

¶5. (C) Comment: Although Ambassador had previously made the same points to several of Zia's confidants, Zia appeared taken aback by Ambassador's message, but recovered quickly and the meeting ended on the usual friendly note. Ambassador reminded Zia that the Awami League accuses her of being pro-BNP, and that our focus remains on the integrity of the process without fear or favor for any political party.
BUTENIS